

NATIONAL REVIEW

150 East 55th Street
New York 10, N. Y.

Phone: OR 4-1300

October 21, 1960

Editor-in-Chief

WALF BUCKLEY, JR.

Publisher

WILLIAM A. RUSHER

Editors

L. BRENT BOZELL

JAMES BURNHAM

JOHN CHAMBERLAIN

WILLIAM F. GARDNER

WILLIAM F. KENNEDY

FRANK S. MEYER

Managing Editor

FRANCIS L. BECKWITH

Associate Publisher

L. F. McLAUGHLIN

Dear Bob:

Cap Beezley called me up on the telephone the day before yesterday to talk with me about my views on the John Birch Society. We were halfway through a conversation when I was interrupted by the production manager, who was engaged in putting the Bulletin to bed. I was to call him back but could not do so, as I had to catch a train for Hartford.

Mr. Beezley told me that he had heard that I had been derogating the John Birch Society; moreover, that he had not had this information from you, but from someone else, and that he very much hoped you did not know what he knew as you would be very alarmed and very hurt.

I told him what I now tell you: that inquiries we receive in this office with respect to the John Birch Society I answer as follows: 1) There is definitely a need for a conservative pressure organization like the John Birch Society; 2) I have known for years and am personally fond of the director of the John Birch Society, Mr. Robert Welch; and 3) there is, however, a critical difference in the analysis he and the editors of National Review make of contemporary affairs. That is all.

I went further--as I told Cap Beezley--with Adolphe Menjou when he came to my office and told me he had resigned as a sponsor of the John Birch Society upon hearing that the news had been publicized, while he was in Europe, of the analysis you make in The Politician. He asked me if I would have done the same thing, and I told him yes, I would have. I told him that when your book was first sent to me several years ago, I wrote you immediately to tell you that I did not subscribe to your analysis.

Mr. Beezley reminded me that he has contributed money to National Review, and I reminded him that you have contributed, indeed much more heavily than he, to National Review, and that I am grateful to both of you for it. But National Review is not for sale, any more than the John Birch Society is, and I must stick by my position, namely, that I am profoundly convinced that you misread American affairs by suggesting, as you publicly suggested in Stamford a few months ago, that the government of the United States is under operative control of the Communist Party of the United States.

The question arises: how grave are our differences? I would say they are very grave indeed. You have a popular front attitude towards conservatism which I do not share. For instance, you are willing to cooperate with the American Mercury, which in my mind is a considerable liability to the conservative cause; while I am not. And I do not want to pretend to you, with whom I have always dealt frankly, that I consider these differences between us as less than critical, or that under the circumstances I feel they are so trivial as not to be worth mentioning to people who address an inquiry to me, in all good faith, about the John Birch Society. I have been very much disappointed by recent events affecting my friendship with Revilo Oliver. He was perfectly willing to associate with anti-Semites and nuts in behalf of a common cause - men with whom he personally disagreed, he told me on many occasions. But when I ventured to disagree with him on the question whether he should publicly associate with those people and continue to be listed on the masthead of National Review, he immediately struck me off his list of friends. In other words, it is all right for the crackpots to disagree with him, but it is not all right for me to do so.

I do hope that in your case our personal relationship will not deteriorate, however openly it may from time to time be necessary to ventilate our differences - as for instance we did on the matter of Pasternak. I say again and finally that I believe your assumptions about the root cause of America's difficulties are false and misleading, and I expect to say as much to anyone who asks me; just as I would not be surprised

nor chagrined if you say as much to anyone who asks you about the premises of
National Review.

Yours most sincerely,

Wm. F. Buckley, Jr.

Mr. Robert Welch
American Opinion
Belmont 78, Massachusetts

C Mr. P. C. Beezley
2749 - 60th Ave., S.E.
Mercer Island, Washington